

# 2025 Provincial Faith & Life Team Report

## Karen West, Chair

### **Mandate:**

The Provincial Faith and Life Team (PFLT) is a standing committee of the Ontario Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches (ONMB) board, as set forth in the ONMB General Operating Bylaw. Its authority and mandate, as outlined in the bylaw, is to:

- (1) Initiate, study and recommend any matters of faith and life related to the issues of ministry and church life in the Ontario Conference or to the relationship of the Ontario Conference to broader issues in society at large.
- (2) Maintain the centrality of the Confession of Faith and interpret and apply it to all Ontario Conference ministries and programs in a manner consistent with interpretations and practices of the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches and the National Faith and Life Team.
- (3) Administer the processes for both credentialing and de-credentialing individuals for Christian ministry who serve the Member Churches of the Ontario Conference, or who serve in other similar leadership and spiritual functions.
- (4) Maintain the registry with the Ontario office regarding the licensed ministers of the Ontario Conference.
- (5) Give guidance to Member Churches, Associate Churches, and any other organizations using the Confession of Faith in matters of faith and doctrine.
- (6) Appoint one of its committee members to serve on the National Faith and Life Team of the Canadian Conference.
- (7) Assist the Board in discerning new congregations applying for membership in the Ontario Conference.
- (8) Assist the Board in matters of the suspension, revocation or reinstatement of a Member Church.
- (9) Interview individuals to determine their standing as described in the bylaw.

Through these mandated roles, the FLT participates in and collaborates with the National Faith and Life Team (NFLT) to articulate and safeguard Mennonite Brethren theological convictions, and provides discernment and guidance on contemporary issues within the Province of Ontario. This task is accomplished primarily through sustaining our MB confessional foundation, guiding and supporting churches and their leaders, and facilitating the credentialing process for church and ministry leaders.

## Provincial & National Accountability:

The PFLT is accountable to the ONMB board, and by extension to the ONMB conference of churches. Each Provincial Faith and Life Team across Canada has a direct relationship to the National Faith and Life Team by appointing one team member as a representative to serve on the NFLT, and to ensure national and provincial coordination and collaboration on Faith & Life Team matters.

## Faith & Life Team:

During this past fiscal year, our Ontario PFLT officially met six times in March, May, June, September, December, 2024 and January 2025, through a combination of zoom and in-person meetings, with extended times for credentialing interviews on May 21 and December 3. Members of our PFLT also engaged in meetings with various church leaders regarding a number of different topics.

The PFLT team members and chair are appointed by the ONMB Board. During this last fiscal year, the following people served as members of PFLT, all of whom are credentialed pastors/leaders within our MB denomination: (Left to Right, Top to Bottom)



## PFLT Members:

- Karen West, WMB Church and PFLT Chair
- David Fowler, Retired ONMB Pastor
- Richard Martens, Glenairn MB
- Matt Unruh, Cornerstone CC and NFLT Rep.
- Renée Serez, WMB Church
- Andrew Plett, Mountain Park
- Ryan Jantzi, ex-officio ONMB Staff
- Krist Lee, ex-officio ONMB Staff
- Bill Stubbs, Glencairn MB

Thanks also goes out to Bill Stubbs in volunteering to track all our marriage licensing, as part of our credentialing process. This year, Bill has decided to step down from this role with PFLT. We are grateful for his support over the last 12 years.

## Credentialing:

One of the major PFLT roles is ensuring that our pastors and ministry leaders are credentialed, in order to maintain the centrality of our MB Confession of Faith in the context of ministry leadership and practice, and to ensure that our pastors and leaders in our ONMB family are ethically able and supported in their ministry roles. The credentialing process includes:

- Completing the national Ministry Credentialing Questionnaire or Mentor-Based Credentialing Process
- being interviewed by two members of the PFLT
- reference checks
- prayerful discernment and vote by the PFLT as a whole
- signing the MB Code of Personal and Ministry Ethics
- attending the National Pastor's Credentialing Orientation (PCO)
- completing Healthy Leaders Training once every five years
- Note: This credentialing process is expected to occur within the first year of a new pastoral assignment, with PCO to be completed within two years of credentialing.

## 2024 Topics and Specific Work:

**1. ONMB Ministry Director** - Supporting Ryan Jantzi as the ONMB Ministry Director in his role responsibilities with our Ontario churches, ministries, and leaders, in matters of faith and life. At the request of Ryan's home church, Maple View Mennonite Church, we are pleased to announce that Ryan was ordained with our ONMB Conference in January, 2025.

**2. Healthy Leaders Training** – Our Pastor/Leaders' Day held in February 2024 focused on a new initiative called Healthy Leaders Training. This event was strongly attended and well received as a step towards establishing regular credentialing training tools to better position healthy leaders and churches in Ontario. Knowing that leading God's people can be complex, this training focuses primarily on pastoral vulnerability and power dynamics. Abuse of power can happen in ways we least expect, causing hurt and damage in ways we least intend. Healthy Leaders Training is preventative training, designed to provide healthy ways for our credentialed leaders to lead and guide others in appropriate, Christ-honouring ways.

## 2024 Credentialing Updates:

- 6 Ministry Leaders Credentialed
  - o Tracy Lepp (South Point Community Church);
  - o Kyla Sinclair-Peters (Multiply);
  - o Stephen Sesink (Evergreen Heights Christian Fellowship);
  - o Leah Sherk (WMB Church)
  - o Michael Thompson (Christian Fellowship Chapel);
  - o Tabitha VandenEnden (Grantham MB Church);
  - o Scott Roes (Maple View Mennonite Church);
- 5 Credentials removed due to resignations from the Mennonite Brethren denomination
- We anticipate credentialing 5-10 additional pastors in 2025

## Church Memberships:

The PFLT is recommending Belmont Village Church to the ONMB Board for an AGM resolution to be received as an Associate Church Member. This designation begins a process of intentionally exploring the possibility of a membership relationship, for a future vote.

**3. Confessional Integrity** - Exploring ways to help our ONMB churches live and model confessional integrity with the MB Confession of Faith on a variety of complex, cultural topics, while still demonstrating Christ's love and grace to all people. 2024 topics: Divorce & remarriage; LGBTQ+; MAID; Loving Well Our Trans Neighbours, Friends and Family.

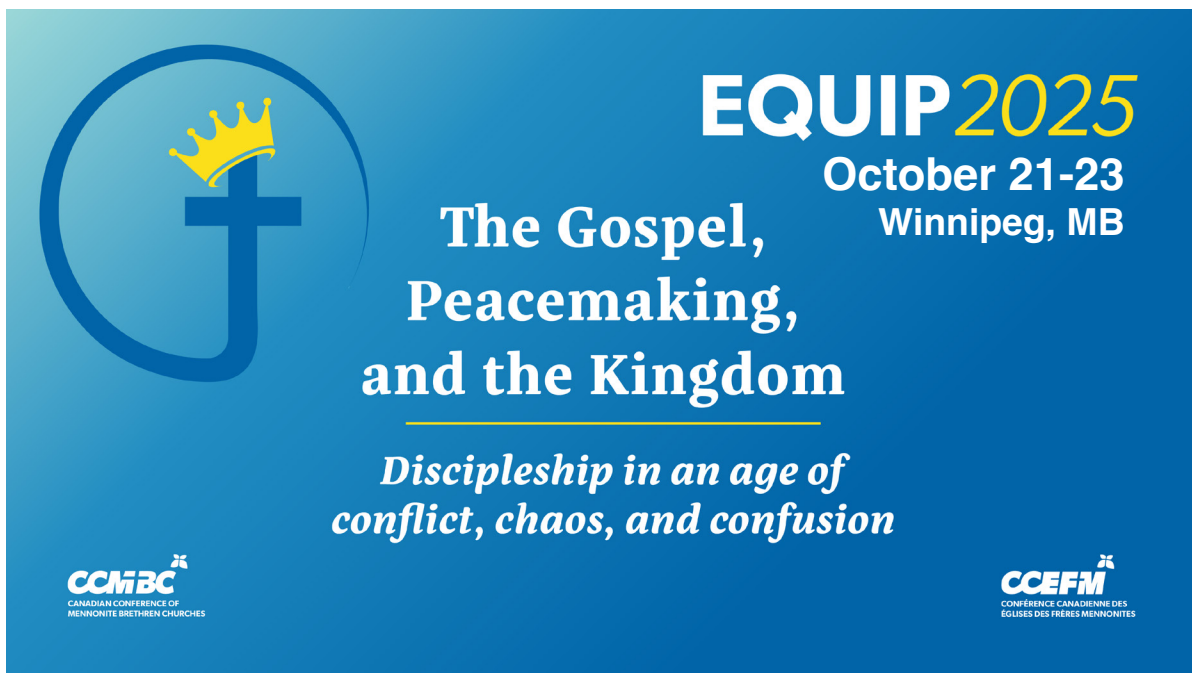
**4. National Faith & Life** - Providing input to NFLT regarding work on collaborative national documents, particularly from an Ontario perspective. These are documents that all provincial MB conferences hold in unity across Canada, and seek to implement together as one denomination, but in many different geographical and cultural settings. In 2024, this work primarily included Collaborative National Church Affiliation & Review Policy, the Growing as a Healthy Leader process, and ongoing review of Confession of Faith wording. Initiating dialogue with the NFLT to clarify aspects of the MB Divorce & Remarriage Policy, and the MB position on women in ministry leadership across Canada has continued to unfold.

## **EQUIP 2025 Conference:**

Please mark your calendars and save the date for **EQUIP 2025**, which will be held in Winnipeg on **October 21-23**. This will be a meaningful time for all in our MB family for a focused on a timely topic: The Gospel, Peacemaking, and the Kingdom. More details to follow, or learn more on the CCMBBC web site!

Your Ontario PFLT appreciates your prayers, and is open to your feedback, comments and questions. It is with great blessing that we serve and support you—our leaders and churches—as a people devoted to the ministry of the Word and to prayer.

Karen West,  
Ontario Provincial Faith and Life Chair  
for the Provincial Faith and Life Team



The banner features a blue background with a white cross and a yellow crown on top, enclosed in a white circle. The text is in white and yellow. The main title is 'EQUIP 2025' in large yellow letters, followed by 'October 21-23' and 'Winnipeg, MB' in white. Below this is 'The Gospel, Peacemaking, and the Kingdom' in white, with a yellow underline. At the bottom, the subtitle 'Discipleship in an age of conflict, chaos, and confusion' is written in white. The logos for CCMBBC and CCFM are in the bottom corners.

**EQUIP 2025**  
October 21-23  
Winnipeg, MB

**The Gospel,  
Peacemaking,  
and the Kingdom**

*Discipleship in an age of  
conflict, chaos, and confusion*

**CCMBC**  
CANADIAN CONFERENCE OF  
MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCHES

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CONFÉRENCE CANADIENNE DES  
ÉGLISES D'IS FRÈRES MÉNNONITES